THE MOTHER-ARTIST

Jane Dearborn Mills

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THE
Mother-Artist

BY

JANE DEARBORN MILLS

(MRS. JAMES E. MILLS)

Introduction by

HANNAH KENT SCHOFF

PRESIDENT, NATIONAL CONGRESS OF MOTHERS

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The Mother-Artist

Introduction

WOMAN'S opportunities and work, which have been for centuries almost entirely confined to the home and to its duties, have so broadened and widened during the last fifty years that she has not yet adjusted herself to the change; and with enjoyment of the new fields open to her, perhaps for a time the world-old duties of wife and mother have seemed less of a career than formerly.

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The pendulum has swung far in the other direction; and with nearly every door open, the thoughtful woman realizes that still in the God-given place of wife and mother she may find her deepest happiness and her broadest, highest use.

The

The Heavenly Father gave her that place, and in so doing He crowned her life with a richness and a fullness that nothing else can give.

Why then has He opened every door to her outside of home? Is it not that she may bring to her own special work a breadth of view, an unselfish love, and a conception of its relation to the world-life?

Has she not gone out into the world to realize the more fully the needs of His children, and the place they should be fitted to occupy in the wider relationships of life? How could she fit them for duties of which she had no conception?

Has not the journeying into new fields taught her that true, broad mother-love is needed in the world-life, and that it must take within its care the childhood of the world?

Woman, enriched and broadened by the wider opportunities, must bring back to the home the fruits of her gathering abroad.

More intelligently, more perfectly, must she fill that God-given sphere of wife and mother,

mother, which is still the highest of all. In the home and in the nation the mother-work is needed. We have tampered long with the sacred trust that is ours in shaping and guiding the little ones.

The nurture of the race is in the mother's hands—for time and for eternity. She gives the ideals of life to the men and women of the future. Can there be a higher trust, a graver responsibility, given to a human being?

May this little book suggest to its readers the beautiful vision of physical and spiritual beauty which the Divine Artist would have as a guide to the Mother and Father Artists, who are His earthly helpers in the care of His children.

HANNAH KENT SCHOFF,

President of the National Congress of Mothers.

The Mother-Artist

Prelude

THERE has grown up in modern days a pitying spirit toward the mother, carrying with it an idea of martyrdom, and that almost unendurable if the number of the children is greater than three. It is an exceedingly unhealthy notion for mothers actual and possible, and for all the world besides. It is a discounting of the dignity of motherhood, for it looks upon its duties as if they were the unintelligent drudgery of the slave.

This little book is a suggestion of the richness of growth possible in the mother's life. No element of character is left unexercised in the doing of a mother's duties. Her love-nature is fully aroused; her intellect may be,

and

and actively so, if she will follow where the children lead with their wise little questions and answer them as truly as she can; and her character may grow more wholly rounded into beautiful relative proportions, each part to each, in this work and atmosphere than is possible to it in any other condition. The drudgery is only that which any artist finds connected with his work.

This, first of all, is what the little book has to say.

Second to that great truth are hints of the kind of training best calculated to hold children in normal states of growth in those years when they must be guided, in large measure, by the mother and the father. And another thought is here brought in, which, though seemingly minor, is not less in value than the main idea. This is the place that rightly belongs to the father in the rearing of the children. Our modern views hold too much to the notion that mothers are alone in giving children's training due consideration. The fact

fact is, that women in their absorbing zeal, and with the same tendency, being human, that men have to assume superiority when the occasion offers, fail many times to recognize the man's true wisdom. The wife, consequently, occupies all the ground, not only hers, but his, so that if he would he cannot come into the nearness to the children necessary to do for them what he might, and worse than that even, she prevents and discourages in him the conscious growing of his fatherhood; for a man can be discouraged as easily as a woman, and the one who can most perfectly accomplish his discouragement is his wife.

Because a man sees general laws and less of detail than a woman, many an ardently devoted mother thrusts aside as of no value the father's opinion which happens to differ from her own, with never a thought of trying to find if there may not be something of wisdom in it, and if by modifying both his and hers a new one might not be formed, stronger and truer than either his or hers alone

alone can be. This is loss of marriage in the rearing of the children, and loss of highest parenthood to the sons and daughters. And it is more; for her appreciation of his thought would arouse in him, if he has them not strongly already, desire and purpose to train himself in fatherhood as she is striving to teach herself true motherhood.

This little book here offered to the world touches upon these most vital ideas. It is only a word; but one word, if it happen to be the right, is better than ten thousand.

The Mother-Artist

I. Love

From out the child's clear eyes his angel pleads
For the companionship of you and me

The Mother-Artist

I. Love

IT never has occurred to human nature to take the best of its best things in earnest,—Peace, and Marriage, and Home-making, and Motherhood. In olden times it frankly cast them out and trod them under foot. Then it thought, one day, how fine would be the mingling of pretty talk with its real estimate of them. It tried it and liked it and has kept on, even down to now. So the vocabulary is a queer mixture. The messenger from Mars must find it puzzling to make connection between Hosannas for "Peace on earth" and Hurrahs for war among men, all in the selfsame breath. He must turn dizzy at the sight of "holy marriage" as a butt for

for jokes in funny papers and conversation. He must be curious to know why a mother is a queen and a slave; and all these medleys he may well take back to his Martian children to show them what queer minds the folks have on the planet they call Earth.

There was a weekly paper once—perhaps it does not any more exist—that had for reason of its being, the exaltation of the making of the home, the giving inspiration to the mothers; and this is what it gave: "Sometimes we (mothers) may think that if we had time for them, we have duties, too, to the outside world, which we are as well fitted to perform as others. But . . . . we are doing woman's noblest and highest duty before dish-pan and bread-board and cradle. I know the daily round often seems monotonous, the care of children is very wearying . . . . but pray for grace and strength. *It is but for a day.* There will be many years . . . . when your house will be quiet and orderly . . . Take heart, dear mothers;

mothers; this is the noblest and highest (duty) you can ever do."

What curious inspiration! The certainty that the children soon will be no more! "Quiet, orderly" rows of dead furniture to "repay" the mother for the priceless possession of child-life! A curious reward for what one would fancy as containing within itself the seeds of its own recompense! And this is the "consolation" most commonly offered to the mothers, which is the most curious of all.

How does the world not know that pity debases motherhood? Did Pericles need consolation for making Athens the glory of the world? Did Michael Angelo need to be consoled for lying two years upon his back on a scaffolding while painting the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel? Did Raphael want consolation for the labor which produced his divine Madonna? Biography does not pity these men. It counts their toil as only so much added to their glory. Can the artist compare with the

the mother in richness of the material worked upon, in possibilities for what may be wrought, in never ceasing exercise of all best human powers, in the companionship with what is pure, and deep, and high, and true? Why this morbid pity for her? It is because there is no serious belief in Motherhood, as there is none in Peace, and none in Marriage. "Hurrah for war!" they cry. "Is marriage a failure?" they ask. The world glorifies war, jokes about marriage, or depreciates it, and talks of motherhood as if it were a form of slavery.

Come, little mother, with the five sweet, bright-eyed children, let us think awhile about the matter. Your life has sometimes seemed monotonous and hard to you; for, though a woman be a queen, if all the world is telling her she is a slave, she more than half believes the tale herself. Then the conditions of her sovereignty seem like chains upon her. She loses sight of her great glory and mourns the limitations of her queenship.

queenship. For there is no place on the earth so high it does not hold one in some bond of law; and queens are no more free from irksome duties than are others.

In the rich life you lead among your children, surely your resources from weariness are more than those of Michael Angelo upon his board. The growing human souls are more inspiring than lifeless forms created out of paint; and this is not disparagement of man's beautiful handiwork, but only appreciation of that greatest art wrought by the hand of the Master of the masters.

Do you know that little gem of Kipling's, "The Story of Muhammad Din"? Only a tiny Indian boy,—the child of a servant,—his little white shirt "ridiculously inadequate," a few bits of broken crockery, some thrown-away flowers, a garden, a white man and a horse,—these are the *dramatis personae* and stage effects, and the story covers but four short pages. It tells how the big man let the child play in the big man's garden with these cast-off things, and

of

of the baby's grateful love, unconscious of himself, and beautiful. The love was no less genuine because the words were few. For, "our conversation," says the author, "was confined to 'Talaam, Tahib,' from his side, and 'Salaam, Muhammad Din,' from mine." But he adds, "Daily, on my return from the office, the little white shirt and the fat little body used to rise from the shade of the creeper-covered trellis where they had been hid; and daily, I checked my horse here, that my salutation might not be slurred over or given unseemly." Has literature ever pictured a more exquisite tenderness of companionship?

* The same kind of companionship, open down to deeps not possible to this man and child, is offered to every mother. The opportunities for it in the daily incidents are always at her hand. You remember when Donald, your eldest, your clear-eyed boy of sixteen now, was just beyond his baby years, and you were suffering with a cold one day. How plainly it comes back again before your memory.

* The two incidents following are facts from life.

memory. You are lying on your bed with swollen eyes and nose, and aching body. Donald soon comes to keep you company. He has the baby confidence in being always welcome, which drives away your momentary wish to stay alone; the angel in it is a nobler healer than solitude could be. In Donald's arms are what he calls "the tools": some wooden pieces, a hammer, and some tacks. He lays them on the floor and climbs up on the bed and leans upon his hands and knees and looks at you. You close your eyes, and in another moment a little finger feels its way along your nose.

"Your nose is 'dust' as red, mamma," he says, in that rising tone which gives the rarest sweetness to his voice.

"Yes, dear, mamma has a cold. Did you bring the tools?"

"Yes, and I'm going to build a wagon," scrambling down and beginning to work busily.

"How?" you feebly ask.

Donald is abundantly amused if he can think

think of anything to say. His answer to your simple question keeps him happy for the next ten minutes. Then a few more words from you supply him with further opportunity. Soon he begs you to admire "the wagon." You pull together all the strength you have into an expression of admiration; and when your eyes are closed again, they have before them a vision of the beaming happiness awakened by your words of praise.

Presently you hear, "Mamma, I'm going down for another piece. I'll come back"; and he goes out, shutting the door after him. Then, evidently remembering that he heard you say once to his father that you loved to hear his little feet upon the stairs, he opens wide the door, pushing it wholly back, smiling and explaining, "I'm coming back, mamma, and I'll leave the door open so you can hear my feet coming." His joy in answering in certainty to your love for him beams in his face and sounds in every tone. You lie there smiling, with no care for aching eyes and

and limbs, and undone tasks. You know now that they cannot injure you or others; because your baby has revealed to you the gladness of "becoming as little children,"—the companionship there will be in it with the Father, even like what the trusting of your little child has brought to you and him.

Another day Donald is in your room. "Donald," you say, "I'm going downstairs to speak to Mary; come."

"No, mamma," he says, "I can wait for you here."

But you fear that he may play with the open fire, and you say, "Oh, Donald, won't you come? It is so much nicer to do things together."

Either the words or the tone appeal to him strongly, for turning with glowing look, he runs to you and clasps you round and hides his face in your gown. Then the little hand is close in yours, and the little feet patter contented by your side. Your heart fills with happiness. The Father's love flows new into your soul with overwhelming power. The joy is unspeakable.

The Mother-Artist

II. Intellect

"Knowledge never learned of schools"
—The Barefoot Boy

The Mother-Artist

II. Intellect

ALL this you remember, and it was beautiful; but it was baby life. It was the emotional, and priceless in its power. Such moments must be rare, however, else they grow sentimental. And you are craving intellectual life, that it may give the emotions healthfulness? No, little mother, it is the intellectual pastime that you crave; the life, you have been having constantly. Why, you began it with the birth of Donald. When he had lived a few short hours only you saw him put his tiny hand beneath his cheek as he lay sleeping, and you wondered, with the little strength you had, what impulse made him do it. During his first two years you studied hygienically and physiologically and psychologically his every sign of growth

growth. As soon as he could talk your college training was brought into use. Your every intellectual power was fully tested now; for you were a true mother and would not give false or careless answers to your boy. You did not tell him that he must not question, or say that you were too tired to answer, implying that you always would be so. You roused your every intellectual faculty, as it was called upon, to meet his needs. You often turned to the "big books" to help you out. These were the boy's delight; for you taught him that one needs always the "big books," and eagerly he waited for the day when he should use them too.

What a review it was of all you knew! The "preliminaries" were only the beginning of it—the geography, arithmetic and grammar, spelling and the history of the United States. Indeed, it included every other branch you had any knowledge of—general history, physics, chemistry, astronomy, zoology, botany, mineralogy, physical geography, mythology, biography, literature of

of all the languages you knew, physiology, anatomy, hygiene, politics, and religion! Have I omitted any? Well, you reviewed those, too. And the course in English was far beyond the possibilities of any college to give. The careful thinking which must precede the words, and then the choosing of the words themselves—for they must be simple and comprehensive—and the re-adapting day by day of thought and language to the growing mind; where can the equal of such a course be found in any hall of learning? Your years of school work soon proved inadequate to meet the task before you. How could a few years of girlish lore suffice for this demand upon your intellect? You were glad you had it, to be sure; for, meager as it was, it was invaluable. It saved you from confusion at the start by furnishing a little store of knowledge. It was diminutive, however, for your needs; for you soon found that answers to his questions claimed from you a study limited by no less bounds than those which keep the universe in place.

When

When the school work was added to your own, how much the interest grew! Only you were anxious, as the children were, about their standing. But here your husband took the matter up.

"Let them alone," he said, "don't worry yourself."

"I'm afraid they'll be careless, if they don't see my interest."

"They'd better be that than intellectual prigs."

"But, Fred, don't you want them to be thorough scholars?"

"I don't care much about it."

You thought immediately of the traditional zest of mother-love compared with that of the father. You had been fancying that Fred was different and you answered frigidly, to hide the disappointment, "I don't understand you."

"Because I want them to be human beings, anyhow, and scholars if they can."

"If they're faithful to school work, won't they be both?"

"Not

"Not necessarily."

You sighed quite audibly, hoping Fred would hear; but finding that he took no notice of your mood, you changed the subject. After that you fervently kept on, pathetically lonely in your zeal, avoiding, when it was possible, the bringing it to the attention of your husband.

But one day, like a kitten newly born, your eyes were opened. Professor C. of the university, had come to dinner. Led by him, the conversation turned upon the limitations and defects of schools under the general system. He argued clearly that true education would have no care in it for rank among one's fellows. "Real education," he went on to say, "is a growth in one's own powers." Fred's breadth of thought surprised you as he answered. He showed appreciation of the deepening, widening, heightening of child growth which you had missed in fussy care for details. You had shut off your understanding of him, imagining your own superiority of mother-love. You had been

been narrowing down your motherhood and missing much of wifehood.

Fred and the Professor went on to say that education is not, either for child or adult, the doing or the thinking according to a plan prescribed by another. It is the free play of the faculties in the balance of correct proportions. You had heard this thought stated repeatedly throughout your school days; but you had never known until now that you had missed the sense of it. From that time the father as well as the mother had a share in the education of your children.

The Mother-Artist

III. Character

Growth, not protection, is the end of life:
To see for self and choose 'twixt good and ill

The Mother-Artist

III. Character

WITH great delight you realized again your husband's interest in the children's growth ; but you still did hesitate over his judgment in the choice of Donald's mates. It seemed as if he must be making, this time, one of the proverbial man's mistakes.

" I shouldn't bother myself so much about bad boys," he said, " let Donald choose for himself."

" But he is such a baby ! "

" He always will be as long as you pick out the boys for him to play with."

" He will know how himself, when he is older, if he doesn't go with any but good boys now."

" Never,

"Never, until he begins to choose them himself. People don't come in assorted lots. Every one is a mixture of good and bad and made up in proportions different from every other one. You can't teach him how much bad to risk for the sake of the good that goes with it by labeling a few. He's got to find out how to do the labeling himself."

Still you doubted. "It seems as if doing it for him at first would help."

"No, the child must be left to grow. I'm no more up in the science of boy training than you are, but I do know one thing,—they must do their own growing. We can't do it for them."

"But, certainly, Fred," you urged, "we can train their judgment."

"Yes, that's exactly the thing to do; go ahead, wifie, and find out a way. Your way wouldn't do it. How would you manage it by your plan? Would you tell Donald that he is too good to play with this and that and the other one?"

"Oh, no, of course not," eagerly. "I would

would be very cautious how I put it."

"Yes, and do you suppose you can pull the wool over his eyes by caution? Doesn't the child scent out the Pharisee in his father and mother quicker than anything else? And doesn't he take to the character himself, like a duck to water? I would rather see my boy in the gutter than a moral snob."

"Oh, Fred!"

"I mean it, dear. A drunkard at least despises his obliquity; a moral snob admires his. But I don't believe there is need of either. I am sure we can find a way to keep our boys reasonably decent both in conduct and character."

You believed this might be done, and remembering the conceit you had discovered in yourself, you set yourself to the task of joining your husband's idea and yours,—freedom for the children and the training of their judgment. You could not plan what you would do all at once; but you could see that home standards must be made those for the child to use in

in his little world outside. It was anxious work at first, but Donald gave you no real trouble. He seemed to know how to be friendly to the good in a boy without being intimate with the bad. Tom had more difficulty, from his more impulsive temperament; but he never was vicious, and his honest little nature worked its way out, finally, under the influences of home. Tom is now as trusty in his choice of friends as Donald.

Step by step you gained your end. Looking back, you see the course you followed.

A certain instinct led you to avoid the plan of coaxing the children with amusements invented for them by the anxious elder ones,—a process which many call "making home attractive." Instead, you took the ground that each child has his part to do toward the happiness of the home. You gave each one some pleasing little task. Among others were their duties to your guests. If it were company

pany to pass the day, the children showed them where they might take off their wraps; if a gathering for the evening, they waited on the door besides; and if the visitor remained for days, a child, appointed, went to the guest room after dinner to make certain that the maid had left it in good order for the night. This special duty could be theirs at eight years old; and they looked forward, from their baby years, eagerly, to their initiation into it. Of course, for certainty of comfort to your guests, you always made it in your way to look into the room yourself; and you were both surprised and pleased to see the accuracy which the children showed in case of careless doing of the servant. Their feeling of the honor laid upon them quickened their eyes and memories.

Again, you studied all their separate tastes. Geography was a great favorite with Donald; and you got globes for him, and maps and pictures; and you directed his attention, by a suggestion now and then,

as

as you had the time for it, to the available literature of any country studied. Tom reveled in machinery of every kind he could get hold of; you gave him all the chances possible for exercising this taste. In all these things Fred did his share as faithfully as you your own. You instigated all the children to invent new games, to make things for themselves, to act in little plays. At times you and Fred joined in a charade; and the ones you joined in were played by them many times, and all the funny points repeated carefully. "You can say funnier things than we can," they said, "because you know so much."

In all of this companionship with them, life's questions constantly arose. You never preached to them of these. You only said, "In such a case it is honest to do so and so, isn't it? what do you think?" The standards for all acts were taken for granted,—honesty and truth and kindliness, and bravery in standing up for them.

Step by step you gained your end. The home has always been their greatest interest. At times even the care for some home comfort or amusement for the rest has been sufficient motive to one or other of them for foregoing a strong attraction elsewhere, and as a natural consequence home standards have become, or always have been, the ones for judgment of things in the world,—just the aim you sought.

You have reason, especially of late, for gladness in your husband's stand against self-righteousness. For it has led, you feel, to a development in Donald's character of unsuspected strength. A little while ago * he came from school and to your room, with his face distressed and pale.

"Mother!" he said, and seemed unable to go on.

"Why, Donald, boy, what is it?" you asked, alarmed.

"Well — you know — how the fellows snub Jones. They won't have anything to do with him. He is always getting in

*A true incident.

in with muckers, but it's because he doesn't know any better. They cheat him into taking hold of some of their deviltry, and he's always their cat's paw. He never sees what they are doing till he's in too far to get out, and since his last scrape the decent fellows have shut down on him, every one of them. I did, too, but the other day he came up to me in the street and asked me if I wouldn't let him speak to me. He said he didn't mean to be so bad, and he wished the fellows would give him another chance; he thought he had found out enough to keep him away from such scrapes another time. He said he didn't like those micks, but he must have somebody, and wouldn't I help him to get in again with our fellows. Of course I told him I couldn't ask any of them to go with him, but I'd stand by him myself. I couldn't go back on him when he came to me like that, could I, mother? I'm awfully sorry for him; he isn't a bad boy, really; he isn't a sneak, like some of those who won't go with him, and he hasn't

a good home, not like us; his mother and father are away half the time, and when they're there they don't want him 'round. Well, while we were talking Sallie came along, and it's happened that way four or five times since; and to-day at recess she came up to me and said: "Donald, I don't associate with any boy who makes a friend of Simeon Jones. If you don't give him up, you'll have to give me up. Will you promise not to speak to him again?"

You waited for his answer, wondering. Would he be strong? for he loved Sallie with all his boyish soul.

"It was awful, mother. Everything turned kind of black; don't you know how it does? But there wasn't anything to do; I'd promised Sim I'd stand by him, so I said, 'No.'"

How your heart ached for the boy! You soothed him as you could, resolving to yourself that you would explain the matter to the girl. She lived in the next town; you did not know her family, and had met her only

a few times. You would, however, find a way to see her and tell her the whole story. But when you and Fred were talking of it together, he said: "Don't do it yet, dear. It's a tragedy for the boy now, but it won't hurt him. We don't know that Sallie is really worth the trouble, and if she isn't it would be taking too much notice of her. If she is what we have thought, perhaps she will find out the truth herself. She knows Donald isn't a rowdy; the boys will begin to talk it over soon, and the whole story may come out in its true colors without our doing anything about it. Sallie will understand Donald all the better for working on it herself; and if we find she's sound and needs a little help by and by, you can step in at the right moment and give it to her."

And you, with trust now, after all these years, in those convictions which were strong with him, answered, "Perhaps that is best, but it's hard to keep still."

The Mother-Artist

IV. The Babies as Teachers

"And by the Vision splendid
Is on his way attended"
—Intimations of Immortality

The Mother-Artist

IV. The Babies as Teachers

ALL this has been strong brain-life. Is it not strange that you have pitied yourself oftentimes for being able to attend the club only occasionally? You have been living the rich mother-life, while at the club they have been talking of it. Your pity ought to be for childless women, or for those mothers who prefer to talk about their children to living in their lives. Thank God that only few of these exist; but still there are some. The pleasure-loving woman is found everywhere; sometimes society is to her taste, sometimes she dissipates in clubs or church "aids." She is the one for pity, not yourself. You have been living the real life, and club, society and church have been

auxiliary

auxiliary to the home and to humanity's interests. This is the proper function of all these organizations. Why not enjoy your intellectual life in this, your work, as other intellectual workers do?

But art and music and the drama, how little you have had of these, you say? You mean, how much of them! Recall your Christmas mornings when the children all were young. The little white-gowned figures, peeping into your room, and then the shout, "They're awake! Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas!" The dancing through the door, each with overflowing stocking in the hand, and the scrambling up onto the bed; the joyful shouts, as wished-for gifts come forth; rejoicings, each over the good fortune of the others; the gratitude and love toward papa and mamma; their own small offerings, bespeaking size of giver and his purse; the flaxen heads and brown, bending above treasures or tossing with high glee; the chorus of merry voices,—could painted picture ever be so perfect, or music made by

reed

reed or string so sweet? You have not known that your own babies were your teachers in art and music; but they far surpass the painted canvas or bands of men playing on instruments.

Their literary criticism, too, is of the highest. Their innocence throws light on *motif* of tale in fiction or in history. They go directly to the heart of it. "Did Antonio spit upon Shylock and call him names because he didn't like Jews? What a *wicked* man, wasn't he, mamma?" The inhuman hatred of Christian for the Jew seemed more than ever fiendish in the light of their innocence. Antonio was stripped, suddenly, of all the glamour with which youth and beauty had bedecked him.

And exquisite, indeed, was *Silas Marner* in contact with their tenderness? It was a rainy day that first time that you told this story. Some little playmates had come in to see your older children. You told the tale as you sat sewing, and six happy faces were looking intently into yours whenever you glanced

glanced up. You told of Silas' loving nature, thrown back upon itself by treacherous friend and faithless sweetheart; you showed that it had nothing to expend itself upon except the hoarding up of money; you told them of the baby straying into his small cottage and falling asleep upon the floor; and how, awakening out of one of those strange naps, the baby's hair appeared to Silas' eyes, short-sighted as they were, like his lost gold; and then he tried to grasp it in his hand, and felt instead the touch of baby curls; and when you said he loved the little thing from the first moment when it nestled in his arms, and how he would not give it up to public charity, and how he cared for it with patient, clumsy skill,—and the kind woman neighbor helped him,—how the sweet faces looking into yours glowed with tenderness! You felt a deepening of your own warm love for this rare gem of literature. The traits of Silas' character, and the child's love for him, which loyally withstood, when she was grown, the allurements of the wealth and station

which

which belonged to her,—these all showed a deeper greatness by the light of the appreciation given them by your child listeners. Oh, those story-hours! How the great drama we are living has unfolded its grand features, clear from false whims and artificial notions, as the child innocence has illuminated the pictures you have held up for their amusement!

Little mother, you have taught your children a few of life's facts and principles as you have seen them; but they, the children, have been leading you along the highways of the living God, where his clear sunlight shows things as they are. Their vision, unobstructed by the pride of life, sees inner spirit where our purblind adult sight discerns but little more than outer shape; and their unsullied natures make demand upon you for the best interpretation of what you have to offer them. Thereby come revelations to yourself of what there is in life which you have never dreamed of heretofore.

It

It was so with the Bible, markedly. You wondered how you should begin it with them, and when the time was come they led you with their guilelessness, thinking, you and they, that it was you that showed to them the truth.

A favorite tale was that of Israel's children. They liked to hear it many times, and often wished to tell some parts of it themselves. "Let me tell it to Cousin Mollie," begged Tom one day, when one of your own cousins whom the children dearly loved was visiting at your house. "Well, the children of Israel complained and com*plained*, and Moses didn't know *what* to do with himself; but the Lord said, 'Don't you worry yourself, *I'll* take care of it all.'" Tom's version certainly had in it nothing of the letter which killeth, and much of the spirit which maketh alive. The children commented that day with eagerness. "*I* wouldn't have done so, would you, mamma, when the Lord had been so good to them and led them away from their wicked enemies,

and

and had taken care of them all the long journey?" And you answered: "Yes, Donald, it is just like what we all do, don't you know? Have you forgotten how you fretted that day that it rained and you had to give up your ball game with the boys? Wasn't that a complaining of what the Lord sent, like the children of Israel?" Then, because you saw him look embarrassed, you went on: "And mamma and papa and Cousin Mollie, too, have to try not to complain. We intended, you know, to spend several weeks at the shore, and when papa found that his business would keep him from going it was hard at the first to imagine the Heavenly Father had meant to be kind. But now see how foolish we all were,—the children of Israel, and you, and papa and I. They got to the beautiful land that was promised to them by taking that journey, and it was the only way they ever could have got there; and you were at home on the day that it rained, and Uncle Jack came here and carried you into the country, and if you

had

had been at the ball ground you would have missed that; and if we had been at the shore we should have lost the visit Aunt Lucy has made us and all that has come to us from it. So you see that the Lord gives us beautiful things when we think he is only trying to keep some blessing from us."

"Yes, and it's mean to treat him that way. I'm going to stop it, aren't you, Tom? But mamma, he doesn't give us something better every time."

"No, sometimes he can't, because we behave so badly; just as I couldn't get baby ready one day to go out when you went, because she was crying and squirming, and yet the going out with you was what she was crying to do. And then, oftentimes, we can't see what the good is which comes; but always it does come, unless we prevent it by being unhappy."

"How do we know it comes, mamma, when we can't see it?"

"By seeing it so very many times at the moment, and so often when the disappointment

ment is over, if we have not seen it at first; and if we remember this, and don't cry and are happy, it is 'trusting the Lord.' Don't you know how often we say that everyone should trust in the Lord?"

"Oh, yes, is that what it means?"

Afterward you heard Donald and Tom talking: "Say, Tom, did you hear what mamma said? She and papa have to try, too, to be good! My! when I'm as good as they are, I won't try any more!"

"Bet yer life, I won't. They're good enough; but then, we can't ever be as good as they are, Don."

"Sure—not."

The Bible showed you its true nature now. Any objectionable external feature fell away from it when you began to tell the story to them. Always there was some way, without your changing any narrative suited on the whole to their young minds, of modifying whatever incident you could not give them in its baldness.

In Joseph's story, a great favorite, you said

said of Potiphar's wife that she wished Joseph to do a wicked thing, and he would not, and that in her anger toward him she told her husband lies about him so that he would cast Joseph into prison. And, in passing, you reminded them of what you said one day about the good in trials; you pointed out that Joseph, not complaining, through his cheerfulness and helpfulness to others came to greatness that was ready for him which he must get by staying a little while in prison; if he had passed his time in moping, the others never would have known that he could tell the meaning of their dreams, and it was this which led to all his greatness. Of Abraham's sacrifice you said it *seemed* to him as if the Lord told him he must make it; but that really he did not want him to, as Abraham found when he tried to obey; but even this you did not tell them in their younger years.

Neither you nor Fred had ever known before the Bible as it is. Till lately it had seemed to you a book of precepts mingled with

with old tales, instructive, morally, in general, as examples or as warnings. From habit and from education you had thought that it was good, without the knowledge, definitely, of how its various phases might be reconciled. The children's atmosphere illuminated yours at the same time that they questioned, and you beheld this Book the history of the human soul. The babies were your teachers where you imagined that you had been theirs alone.

And so it has been with the whole philosophy of life, which flows out of the inner meaning of the Book; for these are one, as is the sunlight with the parent sun. You told your children of the likeness of this world to the soul world; and the fitness of this truth to their child-nature threw for you a flood of light upon the things you pointed out to them. You said that heat is like love; that always people speak as if it were, for we say that we feel warm toward others when we love them. In the same way we speak of truth as light. We often say, "By the light

of

of this truth we can see," etc. You showed that love and wisdom of the Lord—his life—are like the sunlight, for they shine upon us all the time, when we, the earth, do not turn away or put dark clouds between. They give us always happiness and health when we will take them.

All this was told, a little at a time, that you might not carry the child-mind beyond its depth. How your own ideas grew, led by the eager questions! What were the flowers like? Why, they were the thoughts of angels in material form. And animals? They were the acts of love the angels constantly are putting forth in countless numbers.

"And the bad animals, they can't be the acts of the angels?" Donald, the thoughtful, asked.

"No, dear, they are very unpleasant to think of; but even the bad ones have their good powers, and you know that the Bible says that the lion and the lamb shall lie down, sometime, together. So one day the bad will be tamed, and only the good they have in them will live." And

And so the human and the things of nature were woven into one rich web of life, and the word which tells of it is the Great Book Divine, and the child-innocence illuminates it all.

"*And a little child shall lead them.*"

The Mother-Artist

V. Men and Women

"Woman is not undeveloped man,
But diverse"
—The Princess

The Mother-Artist

V. Men and Women

WORK

ONCE Donald asked why papa went to the city every day. Here another revelation awaited you. You had not thought before of the industrial system as more than man's contrivance for the making of the family living and a fortune. That it had anything of God's great purpose in it was a new idea. Now, with those earnest child-eyes looking into yours, the question that arose in your own mind was startling. Is business nothing but a universal grab-bag, a street-boy scramble for the pennies God has thrown? And is the normal method of its being done a jostling and a pushing and a grasping of all the fist can hold, and shoving it greedily into one's own coffers? You answered

answered Donald briefly that papa got the money for your living by his business, and turned attention to the many kinds of trade; and the conversation ended in the boy's decision that when he was grown he would be a grocer's man, because then he could ride around and drive a horse all the time. This was of course enough to satisfy the child, but it did not satisfy you, for you looked forward involuntarily to the day when you must give him a motive for going out into the world of business, and what should it be? So when the children all were sleeping you and your husband talked in earnest.

By one of those coincidences which often happen, he had been roused to similar thought of late by a conversation with a friend. You worked it out together with great interest. You saw that if the industrial system were a mass of disconnected individual efforts for private ends, then men were spending life in making gain for self; for though one might be generous with the surplus riches once possessed, the seeking of them

them would have no inherent purpose in it except self-interest. Thus the only men whose daily lives would be a service to their fellows would be the minister, the missionary and the philanthropist. Light dawned upon the whole when this thought came,—that all life's work of every man should be inherently a service to the world. So when you talked of it again to Donald you had a worthy topic for his questions. Papa's business was no longer a mere contrivance planned by him for getting money for yourselves. It was a part of a great organism which, from its very nature and in spite of the deformity into which man's greed had twisted it, was inherently a service of every man to all and all to each. It was worthy to be scanned by the Godlike innocence of the child, and to be entered into by the manliness of man.

How it delighted Donald to think about the persons and the nations that had contributed to one breakfast and its service! He was especially enchanted with the thought that all of us are daily served by a

greater

greater retinue than kings in olden time could summon for their personal wants. Then followed the comparative study in simple fashion of customs and of habits in different ages and various countries. Then he delighted to consider his father's business as a part of the great industry, and to think out the individuals and nations benefited by it.

But one day you saw a cloud upon the happy face.

"What is the matter, Donald?"

"Why—the mammas—they are all left out. They don't have any business."

"Oh, yes, dear, they have a beautiful part. The papas couldn't do theirs without it."

Then you said that men alone can never be more than half the race. Naturally, you could not show him—for he was too young—how the humanities of home tend to the softening of the business life, and how the rigidness of business gives firmness to the home. You could not picture to him a community of

of men brutalized by lacking woman's influence, or one of women inane from the absence of manhood's special genius. You could point out, though, how his papa dearly loved his home,—made up of you and Donald, Tom and baby. You told him how he carried the love of you all day with him, and that he was a better business man for having it; more honest, just, and eager to serve his fellow men. So, gradually you instilled into his mind the mutual dependence of the man and the woman; the intertwining into one of the masculinity of business and the femininity of home.

Thus you showed that woman's part is homemaking; and that whatever woman did, even if it seemed the same as man was doing in the business world, she always did it in her woman's way, for being a woman it was impossible for her to do it in any other; that all business and all work of every kind has its woman's side, and this is better done by woman than by man, naturally; and that much work of the world has been and still

remains

remains undone because the people are only now discovering that there is a woman's side to many of the businesses. You said that it is in the family that homemaking is at its greatest perfectness, and that here is where we learn of its true value, for the mamma knows how to turn the mere housekeeping into the home which man so dearly loves, and that no man can do it, or even knows how it is done. That this might be made clear you asked if he remembered how he felt in those two weeks when you were absent, and he said eagerly, "Oh, yes, mamma; it was just as if there wasn't anybody much here, though everybody else was here just the same, and Cousin Mollie, too." Then you told him that this was woman's work—she made the home feel like home, and it was why his papa loved you so dearly.

These talks occurred a little at a time, and often after long intervals of interest in other things; for you never forced any conversation,—you always let the children lead. You have seen that what a child is interested in

at

at the moment is what his mind is ready to learn about just then. One day Donald said, "But men can keep house, can't they, mamma? because Uncle Jack did in the mountain camp."

"Yes, men can do housekeeping, but not homemaking."

After that you saw him watching you sometimes when you were at your household tasks, and he would say, "Now, you're making it feel 'homey,' and I don't know how you do it, do I?" You overheard him telling Tom that mamma knew something that papa never could, nor all the men in all the world; it was how to make home feel homey. "And she has a thousand ways, Tom, of doing it, and you don't ever see her doing it, and she's doing it all the time." Tom's black eyes opened wide; the puzzle was too much for him.

One day Donald asked suddenly, "Men wouldn't know how nice it is to have home homey, would they, if they never had any women to do it for them?"

This

This was the opportunity you wanted, and you purposely led the conversation to the great national home. You pointed out some of the simpler public interests which provide for the national family, and showed that the papas do their share for the big home; some by taking office, and all through voting. Donald listened eagerly, and suddenly exclaimed, "Yes, and the mammas do the housekeeping for the big home! What is it that they do, mamma?"

You answered that no woman is allowed to do her part in the great national home, and the child was deeply disappointed. He exclaimed, "Why, that's just like the men keeping house by themselves and never knowing how much bullier it would be to have some mammas to make the home!"

You answered him that many men and women now are trying to alter this restriction, so that the country, the large home, may have the mother-care for all, especially for its small children; and you said that women are beginning already to do something

thing of the municipal housekeeping; also, that in a few places, notably the great country of Australia, the motherhood of some women lawyers finds now its rightful exercise in one usefulness man never thought of,—the Children's Court. Donald enthusiastically exclaimed, "When I'm a man, I'll try all the time till the mammas can be mammas in the big home, too."

SEX RELATIONS

The usual questions about birth came early, as they always do with children not devoid of intellect. When eight-pound Tom appeared, without announcement to the older boy, and claimed the family rights, Donald, quite naturally, inquired where he came from. Fred had informed the child of the baby's advent, and gave him an answer simple and true. It awakened no surprise in Donald's mind because there was no mystery thrown around it. He accepted it and forgot it, and three years later, when the baby sister

sister as suddenly claimed the same rights, he asked the selfsame question.

You and Fred have kept this truthfulness throughout; for lying is to you a practice dangerous and immoral, and more so regarding what you say of sexual matters to your children than about any other subject in the world. The physiology of plants furnishes nature's own open revelation, and the hatching of the bird. Now that Donald is nearing manhood his father is instilling into his mind, as if incidentally, thoughts of the reverence manhood owes to womanhood. This is as it should be; for a mother's instruction to her boy to honor womanhood has in it, unavoidably, something of appeal for honor to herself; a father's, on the contrary, has all the force of the generous spirit of reverence for what is, wholly, not himself. A boy respects his mother because of what she is; but why her womanhood should command his boyish reverence, and how to act it out, is learned more deeply from his father's honor for her than it can be in any other way.

Moreover,

Moreover, the father can impress upon his boy more strongly what and what not to do in his association with girl friends; for the father has his own knowledge of boy nature, and what he tells him as possible in self-control the son believes; while the mother's same advice on practical purity, unsupported by the father, the boy dismisses oftentimes from his mind as "only a woman's; she doesn't know what a boy is."

You believe, with reason, that Donald and Tom are profiting by this association of their father with them in sexual knowledge; and with your own nearness to the girls, the signs are promising that the home standards will be those of all your children in this supreme relation of our human lives.

The Mother-Artist

VI. Discipline

The Slaughter of the Innocents

The Mother-Artist

VI. Discipline

SOME persons praise your children's manners and characters, although it is commonly said among your friends that in your children's babyhood you used no discipline. The praise is often not discriminating, and the criticism does not disturb your peace of mind; for people are accustomed to assert that any child of three should have been "conquered," whatever that may mean, long before he reached that age. They speak as if all the respectable class, with the exception of a few unfortunates, had had this inestimable process practiced upon them in their infancy with great success. You fail to see the grace they have gained by it. Certainly most adults use less constant self-control

trol than they expect from children; they are less obedient to the laws of right living that they know than children are to parents; they are more selfish in proportion to the intelligence they have. Where are the signs of special sanctification which has come from that subduing of their spirits in their babyhood which they exalt so highly? The little one in patience surpasses any average adult. What man or woman would endure the nagging and restrictions placed upon a child by even the good intentions of the fathers and the mothers? Children listen to constant criticisms and remarks about themselves, in private and in public, with only an occasional cry of pain against them. What adult is there who would bear a thousandth part of them without ill temper? Children obey the whims and notions of the mother and the nurse, and arbitrary dictates of the father, with none but an infrequent assertion of their independence. They yield to punishment for inadvertent and unconscious errors with less rebellion than most adults show in suffering

fering consequences for their own mistakes. Children are slaves to ignorance and error, follies, crimes, of parent, teacher, guardian, and nurse toward them, and largely they are willing ones. Instead of an attempt to "conquer" them, the parent and the teacher should daily kneel with the prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner toward these little ones."

You had by instinct some perception of your true relation to your children. As soon as a new immortal soul came into your life you recognized him as an independent being. He was not accountable to you for every act and thought; instead, you must account for what you do for him to your and his Creator. In certain external affairs you must point out the way, and this includes the teaching of principles in words; but the guidance of his spirit is beyond your knowledge and power—it is in the hands of God alone. Your greatest work with your child is to learn how not to meddle with his normal growth. Given parents who are meaning to

to live the highest life they know of, and as great freedom to the children as is compatible with outer order and healthfulness, and instruction in principle by the free and natural conversation of home, and you have the best conditions for the growth of the child into a normal spiritual being. (There are many abnormal spiritual beings.) Donald was playing with his blocks one day, and you asked him to bring you something lying on the table; he did not start even at your second asking; and then you saw that he was wholly bent upon planning the structure of a house. It flashed upon you that checking his idea would lose to him, perhaps forever, some brain-power just struggling into birth. You rose and fetched the thing yourself. An acquaintance who was calling soon reported your delinquency: "She is spoiling that child; she doesn't make him mind. My six children *all* learned to mind *long* before they were as old as Donald."

Fred smiled when he heard it. "I'm glad to know in time," he said, "how she made such dismal failures of those six kids."

Nevertheless,

Nevertheless, respect for their individuality did not compel you to give them every injurious thing they wished. At first, though, you made a mistake in your way of refusing what you knew was harmful, and this even led to your beginning to yield to the child from sheer weariness in trying to talk him into willing acquiescence with your decision.

"If Donald wants to make a dyspeptic of himself," said his father, "there needn't be any talk about it; he simply can't do it." He was trying to persuade you to give up the habit of reasoning with the child every time you refused him anything. You had started with this error, common to mothers who think much about treating children justly, that giving him a reason would fill his heart with a sweet contentment upon being deprived of the only thing he wanted at the moment, and to his childish perception the only thing he ever would want. This course soon got you into trouble. Finally, a scene was this:—

"Mamma, there isn't any sugar on my oatmeal!" "Why,

"Why, yes, dear, there is. You saw me yourself when I put it on. You can't see it because it has melted. Don't you know that when we put milk ——."

"Mamma, give me some more! Give me much! I want much!"

"No, dear, you mustn't have any more, because ——."

"Give me much! I want much!"

"No, dear, it will make you sick."

"I *want* to be sick. I *like* to be sick."

"Oh, Donald, think how uncomfortable you feel when you are sick!"

"No, I don't feel uncomfle! *Give* me some more sugar!"

"But, Donald, it makes mamma trouble to take care of you when you are sick."

"You don't *have* to take care of me."

"Oh, yes, mamma couldn't let her little boy be sick and not take care of him!"

(A roar.) "Yes you could! *Give* me some sugar!"

Here Fred arrived upon the scene. The little tyrant soon was settled by being borne upon

upon his father's shoulders up to his own room and going breakfastless. Fred talked more seriously now with you than ever before; and he persuaded you to try his way for a month, and if it seemed not better for the child you would go back to yours without more protest from himself.

At first it was very hard, but steady practice made it easier in time. "No, Donald, you can't have any more sugar"—this the next day.

"Why not?"

You did not answer.

"Why-y-y no-o-ot?"

"Never mind why not. You can't have it."

A roar; but this time Fred was there. "Donald!" he called across the table, "will you stop, or shall papa take you upstairs, just like yesterday?"

The child stopped suddenly on the half-cry and gazed through tears at his father, who looked at him sternly. Donald turned to you: "Mamma, wipe Donnie's tears."

That

That was the last conflict for sugar in his father's presence. The struggle was much harder when you and Donald were alone; for you had taught him skill in argument, and indeed, yourself, too; and once the habit formed, much time was necessary to get both you and him out of it when there was not the restraint of the masculine presence. However, the month saw great improvement, and your old ways have never been resumed. You learned then that the time for reasoning with a child is when he has no immediate personal interest in the matter.

As the children grew and began, even in tender years, to come into more companionship with you, occasions became rarer, day by day, when they desired to act contrary to the general tone of home. They often erred from inadvertence, even as adults do; but little faults were overlooked, as grown persons overlook each other's; the serious ones were analyzed with them, and consequences of continuing such a course were pointed out. You also learned many a lesson new to yourself;

self; among them, that in case of unreason and rebellion in the child, you often, not he, were the one who had set the example in unreasonableness. Whenever you discovered this you instantly retracted that which had been wrong in your requirement or unjust in your rebuke; for you saw that you cannot teach justice to your child by means of an injustice of your own to him. Many a rough place has been made smooth and the child drawn nearer to you in genuine love by your simple words, "I was wrong." You felt the blessing of it one day when you heard Tom say, "Mother always gives a feller a chance!"

As you looked around upon the mothers that you knew, and studied the effects of different modes of treatment of their children, you added, one by one, rich treasures to your store of knowledge of the souls of childhood. Of these, one was that an unconsciousness of wrong in doing is a part of that unconsciousness of self which makes the angelic innocence of these little ones. But we adults, not recognizing how much harm we do, work

unceasingly

unceasingly to form within the child the habit of a constant thought of self. The ignorance of wrong in some act that is to us a monstrous thing was illustrated to yourself one day in an amusing incident told by a friend: "I was out," she said, "and when I came home, Doctor," her husband, "said to me, 'Robert has been naughty. I have put him to bed. You must not sympathize with him.' Then he told me the story. Robert cried out when he saw me, 'I don't see why I have to be put to bed; I only blew soap bubbles through a pipe, and Ben and Sam they just *poured* out water by the pailful!' 'But, Robbie,' I said, 'you told a lie!' He stopped crying and looked at me with wide-open eyes. 'Did I? Did I tell a *lie?* Oh, well, it's all right then; I'll stay here all day.' So he settled himself down, entirely willing to take his punishment."

You laughed with her in thinking of the child, so ready for his spiritual cleansing, directly he was conscious of the blackness of his sin; but it impressed you greatly. So many times you had discovered in your children

dren this same unconsciousness that they had fallen into error. You asked yourself the question, and you and Fred discussed it seriously,—Is punishment the best means for meeting inadvertent fault? Is an unconscious lie more dangerous to the growth than the self-consciousness forced on a child by constant reprimands and punishments? The sin of lying is a monstrous thing; but equal in enormity is the consciousness of self in every deed one does. All free and generous acts are bound in chains by the accompanying thought of one's own part in the doing. All spontaneity of thought is checked by this same evil. The enormity of it is plain: If thought of others is the angelic life, then thought of self must be the opposite. Self-consciousness is the besetting sin of Americans, especially in the Northern United States, and is cherished by us as if it were a virtue, and nurtured by us—indeed, called into life almost—within the souls of children, who when they come from God have all the self-unconsciousness of angels.

Another

Another incident, quite different, affected you most strongly. Calling one afternoon upon a friend, her little child of three came to the parlor where you sat waiting for her mother. She had a doll clasped in her arms, and was soon prattling happily, as children will to those who love them. She especially liked your dainty gloves, and stroked them softly as she talked with you; but when the mother came she said, "Don't touch her gloves; you will soil them." But you had allowed her playing with them before, and the child did not hear her mother's words. Again she spoke, quite sternly, but still the baby did not hear. Then a third time the command was given, "Mamie, if you do that again I will take the doll away, and you can't have her any more." You watched the struggle in the baby mind to free itself from absorption in playing with your glove. It was not quick enough, however, to gain the victory, and just once more you felt the little touch upon your hand; then it stopped; but the mother had already risen, and calmly

taking

taking the doll from the child's arms she threw it into the open fire. Never, to the last day of your life, will you cease to hear at times the cry of torture that burst from the baby heart. In agony the little one stamped and screamed. Would not the mother have done the same if some one had suddenly thrown her child into the fire? Immediately the baby was taken from the room, and you sat struggling with your tears and your fierce anger toward the mother. When she returned, her face, which was very beautiful, had the relentless calm of fate. "Baby has many dolls," she said, "but that one was her favorite. She *must* learn to mind, though, and to control that frightful temper." You got away as fast as possible. You thought of all the happy prattle of the child before the mother had come down, and how you had loved the feeling of the little hand through your glove. You knew that your encouragement had caused her mind to be absorbed so that she could not get it fixed on what the mother said. And you wondered

wondered if the child would hate her mother all her life, as you felt that she must hate her at that moment. If not, the other thing must happen: with the murder of her love for her doll-child was slain some power of loving, and all through life her soul would walk a cripple through the world. And when you contrasted in your mind the relentless calm upon the mother's face and the shrieking agony of the tortured child, you wondered if anyone could question which temper was the deadliest, or whose the real persistence in gaining her own end. When you were calmer you were able to do more justice to the mother, by recognizing her self-deception in supposing that cruelty to her child was duty, and in not seeing that more of self-will was in her own act than the little one manifested in her absorption with the soft prettiness of the glove. But you were shocked out of your charitable mood a little after when the mother explained to you that she showed the child, as soon as she was calm, that it was for her, the child's good,

good," she did the heartless thing. The thought flashed across your mind how fitly the child might have answered what your little Fanny said to you when you had told her once that she must learn to give up. "No, mamma," she whimpered, "I don't want to learn to give up! You give up! Why can't you learn to give up? Papa, come here and make mamma learn to give up."

Since you did not feel at liberty to lay before your beautiful friend this true wisdom from the heart of your three-year-old baby, you turned away with very little answer, thinking that she had added another cruelty to all the rest. You recovered your charity again in time, for this mother was a very faithful one, according to her—darkness; and who has much of lightness after all? But you thanked God that your children never had been put to torture such as this; and you registered a vow anew that "discipline" should never gain an entrance to your home.

The lack of it mourned by your friends has

has not borne as yet the fruit predicted by them. Said Donald: "Some boys wanted me to go rob a cherry tree. I wouldn't go. I don't see any fun in it." Tom had more of the marauder's spirit when the time arrived for his testing. "Papa," he said, "the boys asked me to get pears off of Mr. Greene's trees, but Don put in his oar, and then the thing was all up. Mr. Greene's a stingy old thing anyway, and the pears are all rotting like anything 'cause he's gone away anyhow, and his folks have gone off with him. A few pears won't hurt him. We weren't going to take many anyway. Don better keep his mouth shut next time."

Fred seldom, if ever, remonstrated with the children; if he had had such a habit they never would have revealed themselves to him in this free fashion. He quietly now commenced to talk of Mr. Greene as if he had no opinion in the matter different from that of Tom. He did not know that Mr. Greene had gone, or any of his family; he was sorry to hear of his stinginess. Questions followed.

When

When had the Greenes set off, and for what place? In what particular cases that Tom knew of personally had Mr. Greene acted in a stingy way? The outcome was that Tom admitted, one by one, that all the stated facts about the gentleman were hearsay, wholly. "The fellers said" this, that and the other, until the final proof was that "the fellers said" it all; and further conversation brought to light the fact that Mr. Greene and several of his family had been seen in town late that afternoon, with not the least appearance of going on a journey or of having been on one; also, that Mr. Greene, far from being stingy, had borne himself in several noted cases as a remarkably liberal-hearted person. Then with the same skill, the father drew out the child's opinion that life in the community involves necessity for respect for the property of others; and that there is no third course, middle between the taking and the not taking of a neighbor's goods. The end was that Tom saw, as if from his own thought, that "there isn't much fun in stealing, after all."

He

He had not called it stealing at the first, and when he got to that you knew that he was safe. He never showed an interest in marauding afterward.

So it has been throughout. Analysis of life's questions with the children, considered from the principles of right, is leading them to do the same, unconsciously, for themselves. As a rule, they are respectful, affectionate, kind to one another, helpful and thoughtful. Donald naturally leads in judging of principles, and the others follow, learning step by step. You are right in being satisfied that all this conduces to their growth far more than "discipline."

The Mother-Artist

VII. The Working Out of Natural Law

For thorns nature returns us thorns, not blessings

The Mother-Artist

VII. The Working Out of Natural Law

THERE is a difference, however, between the "disciplining" of a child for inadvertent errors or for his natural excitement under wounded feeling, and the meeting wisely his deliberate disobedience, lying, or deception. The purpose, rightly, of all punishment is to impress upon him the great law that results inevitably follow action. You will never forget how faithfully you and Fred studied to apply this law when penalty was necessary. Perhaps the severest case that you ever had was the escapade of little Tom when he was less than nine years old. His was the most venturesome spirit of all your children, and it was natural that among other tests of the resources which life presented to him, he should

should try to find what lying and deceit might bring to him of profit; and this, though in the depths of his heart he was honest as the daylight. One Saturday he said to you that Mr. Long had asked him to come that afternoon to see his little son, who was about Tom's age. Invitations to the Long home had been given before for parties, and though you were surprised that Tom should be invited alone, as no particular intimacy existed between your two families, it did not cross your mind to doubt his word. When he came home you asked about his visit, and he gave you an account in quite minute detail of the good time he had had with Oscar Long that afternoon, and what they had been playing. It flashed upon you once, for a moment, that he looked very flushed and more be-tumbled as to hair and clothes than such a quiet visit seemed to warrant; but Tom was always one of the much be-tumbled kind, and so the momentary thought made no permanent impression. He seemed, however, rather serious,

rious, and went to bed quite early, another curious happening; for he was usually the one who fought off sleep the longest, and resisted the bed hour as his most deadly enemy.

Mr. Long was not a frequent visitor, but happening to pass that Sunday afternoon, next day, he dropped in for a call. As he was leaving Tom chanced to come into the room, and Mr. Long asked, pleasantly: "Can't you come over some afternoon, Tom, to see Oscar? You needn't always wait to be invited to a party, need you?"

Tom blushed and stammered out a "Thank you," and ran away. Mr. Long laughingly remarked upon the bashfulness of children, and took his leave. You were bewildered, and sent immediately for Tom, and summoned Fred as well. The child stood before you with hands in pockets, head hanging down, working uneasily upon the carpet with the toe of his boot. He told the story now which evidently was the true one. A boy, Ralph Norris, whose father was away,

away, had begged Tom and two other boys to come to the pasture where the Norris horses were feeding and try their luck with an unbroken colt. This was a strictly forbidden thing to Ralph, and so more attractive to all the boys. He assured them that his father did not know how tame the colt was, that there was no danger, not the least. They evidently had not needed much overurging. They went and tried their luck. They all were thrown in turn, but boys are made of India rubber stuff, as everybody knows, and they were not greatly hurt. Perhaps what saved them finally from doing more daring things than they had yet attempted was a slight cut which Ralph got on the forehead, and the consciousness that cuts must be accounted for at home suggested that perhaps the wiser way would be to discontinue this especial pastime for the afternoon.

This was the tale, in boy's version, that Tom told, and when he had finished there was silence for awhile; he shamefaced, you

and

and Fred nonplussed with the so suddenly revealed depravity of the hitherto, as you had known it, honest baby heart. At last Fred spoke: "Do you think your mother and I would have lied to you, Tom, as you have lied to us? Was it treating us fair, as we have always treated you?"

"No," slowly answered Tom, his face flushing a deeper shade, "I know it. It was pretty mean behavement."

"Yes," replied his father, his voice more stern even than he intended from the fear of smiling at Tom's unusual word, "it was. And you will suffer for this, Tom, and I am sorry for you. That's all, now. You may go." And Tom, surprised that if he was to suffer he was not told how, looked up doubtingly, and then slowly left the room.

You and Fred in talking of the matter came to a decision which was summed up in his words: "The way to make an impression on him, a real one, is to watch our opportunities, and when a chance comes for some pleasure which he could have had if we could have

trusted

trusted him, to refuse it because we cannot know whether he is telling the truth or not. This is the legitimate penalty which follows lying,—loss of the confidence of others."

You saw the danger possible to result in the crushing of the child's spirit by making him feel that he was always under penalty for this one fault, even when he told the truth; but on further talking you found the way for meeting this phase of the difficulty, and then you waited for your opportunity.

It was not long before it came. One morning, just as Fred was leaving for the city, Tom ran in: "Oh, mamma, Mr. Carey (the next door neighbor) says I may have a ride in his automobile if I will come down to his store at five o'clock. May I? He wants me to tell him before he goes, in an hour." This was in the first days of automobiles, and Mr. Carey's was the only one in your town.

Fred turned to you, and under cover of a second good by, he said: "Now stand firm, dear. Don't let your sympathies run away with

with you. It will never have to be done again if you do it thoroughly this time. I can't stay, and besides, you can manage better alone."

"May I go?" Tom repeated eagerly, as his father left the room.

"Come to me, Tom. How can I know that Mr. Carey has asked you to ride in his automobile?"

Tom looked at you, puzzled: "Why he did, mamma. You can ask him. He's right there on his piazza."

"Do you think that I want him to know that I can't trust my little boy's word?"

The child gazed still more earnestly at you, as if trying to think what you might mean; and then the boy face flushed as the consciousness came that you were doubting him because of his doings of a certain afternoon.

"I *am* telling the truth now, mamma."

"How do I know it? I thought you were that other day, and all that you told me were big lies."

"This isn't; truly, truly, mamma."

"Perhaps not, but I don't know how to tell the difference. How can I?"

The

The look was anxious now.

"But, mamma, can't I go?"

"I don't see any way. I should be ashamed to ask Mr. Carey whether he really invited you."

"But he *did*, mamma, he *did!* Let me go, *please*, mamma. I never rode in an automobile in all my life. Mamma, *can't* I go?" The tone grew more alarmed and excited as the impossibility of making you believe him came to him with the full force of all it meant to him.

"What way can there be for me to be sure that this is not just like your telling me that Mr. Long had invited you to go to see Oscar?"

The child stamped with excitement and grief. "You *might* let me go! You *know* he invited me!"

"Do I, Tom, dear? I am longing to trust you. Tell me how I can know what the difference is between this and the other time."

The child for one short moment searched

your

your face in agony and then threw himself upon the floor and cried out between deep sobs, "When I *do* tell—the truth—you won't —believe—me! He *did* ask me; he *did!*"

You let his grief expend itself while you were thinking rapidly. As the sobs grew quieter, Tom called, "Mamma."

"Well, Tom."

"Are you always going to think I'm lying? Have I got to stay at home from *everywhere* if you don't hear folks ask me to go?"

"Come here, dear;" and when he came, you pushed the brown hair back from the hot little face. "We can fix it for another time, but not this; there is no way for you to go to-day. Hush, dear, listen. Have you forgotten what papa said to you that Sunday when we found out how you had deceived us? He told you that sometime you'd suffer for what you had done that day. He knew that there would be a time when something just like this would come up; for of course we can't trust you again till we know you don't deceive

ceive any more. Now we will do this: You go to Mr. Carey and tell him that mamma can't let you go riding to-day, and thank him for asking you; then the next time I meet him I shall thank him besides, and then I shall know by his answer whether he really invited you. And if you will promise me to be a more truthful boy in the future, and I find this is true, I will trust you next time and always, as long as you tell me the truth."

Tom leaned his head against your shoulder, and the tears flowed fast again, but quietly. Finally, he said, "If you believe my promise if I stay at home, why can't you believe it and let me go?"

But since the time of Donald's sophistries about the sugar you had cultivated a habit of shunning this kind of argument; therefore you had no difficulty in answering: "I cannot talk with you about that now, Tom. Dry your eyes; Mr. Carey will be going soon. You must go over to tell him immediately."

Once more he gave way. His arms went round

round your neck. "Isn't there *any* other way, mamma? I'll stay shut up alone all day to-morrow if you'll let me go this afternoon."

"No, dear, there's no more to be said. Will you go?"

But again he appealed: "Mamma, won't you go tell him? Then you will know right away that I have told you the truth."

"Yes, I will go if you say so. But just think for a moment. Only yesterday you were reading of soldiers, and wished you could be one, so that you might have the chance to be brave. Now if you can do this that I ask, you will be just as brave as any man soldier who ever went into the battle and faced all the guns of the enemy. Wouldn't you like it, Tom, dear, to be strong and a hero?"

The tears stopped now, and Tom looked at you with an expression on his face of a new-wakened thought. "Would it, mamma?" he said eagerly. "Would I really be a brave soldier if I did this?"

"The

"The best kind of one, my brave soldier boy!"

"Then I'll do it. You watch me at the window, mamma, and see me march up to the enemy." He laughed now, and seized his hat and set off on his soldier duty.

You watched, as he had asked, and you saw him marching to the time of a tune he whistled, with steady step; but when he neared the house he faltered for a moment, and then braced up and went up the steps and gave his message. His head was held erect, and he looked without flinching into the face of the gentleman who sat on the piazza with his newspaper. Tom evidently made his words as few as possible, but you saw the gentleman cordially shake him by the hand; and then the boy ran home as fast as possible, and right into your arms, and cried again, quietly, but deeply. Your own nerves, overstrained, gave way now that the victory was gained, and there was no more need of hiding your real feelings from Tom from fear that he would think that he

could

could use them to gain his end; and you leaned your cheek against the tumbled-up brown hair, and did not try to check the tears that came almost as freely as his own. Suddenly he looked up. "Are you crying, mamma? What for?"

"Don't you know that it hurts mamma to deny you a pleasure, and to feel she cannot trust you?"

The loving spirit of the impetuous child was fully roused at this new view of the matter, and he said quickly: "Don't cry any more, mamma. I didn't know you cared like that. You *can* trust me, mamma; I never shall tell a lie again. I felt awful mean all the time I was doing it. Wasn't it funny, I couldn't look right at you when I came home that afternoon, and I went off to bed as soon as I could because you kept looking at me, and it almost seemed as if you knew that what I told you wasn't true."

"Why did you do it, Tom?"

"I don't know, mamma. I guess 'twas because I thought it would be such awful

good

good fun to try a colt that Ralph's father said would break our necks if we got on his back. It *was awful* good fun." Tom drew a long breath, as if renouncing with a last regret one of the highest sweetnesses of life. "But I won't ever lie to you again. It don't pay, does it?"

"You surely can never be happy in doing such things. It is dreadful to feel that you can't look mamma in the face, and papa, and that you are mean to us when we have always been honest with you. And besides you have to lose many pleasures like this of to-day just because we can't tell whether or not you are speaking the truth. I shouldn't think riding a colt that might break your neck at any moment would pay for all that."

Tom looked very serious. Suddenly he said: "It's just like the boy who cried 'Wolf,' isn't it? Nobody believed him when the wolf really did come. I'm just like him. But I never will be again, mamma, *never*."

The Mother-Artist

VIII. Cares, Confusion, Disorder

The baby's toys left by him on the floor
Have more of living art in them than all
The galleries of all the world

The Mother-Artist

VIII. Cares, Confusion, Disorder

IT is true that you always say that your married life has been a happy one, but generally you add that many cares have somewhat thrust the happiness aside, even altogether at times, and the noise of children and confusion of their chatter and childish heedlessness have wearied nerves already worn upon by duties crowded into too small time and space. But, little mother, it is so the artist works,—the painter, sculptor, music-maker and the poet. You are the greatest artist of them all, for what you work upon is human life. The noise and the disorder of the children, they disturb you, do you say? Why is it, then, that you enjoy the bustle of a suburban dwelling place? For often

often you have said that you would live in this, your chosen town, upon a crust, rather than in the quiet of the country. Yet here the rattle of the street car is not wholly wanting either day or night. The venders and the newsboys make the morning hideous with their cries. Yet, when you are longing for a day of pleasure, toward what do your thoughts turn? To the quiet country place, where birds and bees make all the sounds, except for an occasional reaper in the field or whirr of mill? Oh, no, this is not what you think of, for you are a born lover of the city. You crave a day of leisure in New York without the shopping of your usual trips. But even with that you always pass the hours quite happily, although you do grow weary in the end. You never heed the din that fills the air of the metropolis. Often you have longed to spend the months of winter in the city; you have declared that this would be the perfect life,—the city winter and suburban summer. Yet, though you lived away from busy centers, in quiet parts,

you

you would have more noise, perhaps, than in your suburbs. Are not the merry sounds of children at their play more musical than city noises? and even children's discord than clang of trolley bell and shriek of engine and the wagon's rattle over stony streets?

And the disorder; what is it you call that? The baby's toys upon the floor? Why be ashamed of them when Mrs. H., your friend of wealth and elegance, calls at your home? The Noah's animals one day were all spread out by baby's matchless art. The lifeless things had taken on themselves something of baby-life, imparted by the little hand. A grace had fallen over them; how, you did not know. If an adult had fixed them so, they would have been no more than ill-formed wooden things; but the abounding joy of baby in his play had somehow altered them, and being left here now, when he had gone out for his daily ride, they still kept with them much of his sweet grace. As they caught the eye one involuntarily felt the glow that baby presence always brings to any woman's being

who

who is at heart a mother. Would you deprive your friend of that?

You do not see, for no one yet has known, the highest value of the homely floor. It is not merely to be walked upon; it is, still more, for baby and his toys. It is so long and wide,—magnificently large for every baby need. Guarded by its walls, there is no danger of his falling off. Adults have selfishly monopolized the floor, as they have many another gracious thing, and always to their own hurt. If we would have the gladness that God sends with every baby who is born, we must retrace our steps and share with babyhood the things that are by right its own. Then shall we know the gifts they have for us. We think that babies come with empty hands; oh, no, they bring us overflowing wealth. Just as of old, the envoy, when he traveled, came "bearing gifts" from his great master's court, so baby comes from God's own courts with treasures for the courts of earth; but we, in our blind zeal for selfish "order," destroy these gifts, and lose

the

the grace and tenderness and peace that would be like the air and sunshine to our souls and baby's. So we are stunted in our growth, and he as well.

In that new future we all love to think of, when we shall understand the worth of life's best things, the architect will no doubt plan the floors with thought direct upon the baby's needs. They will be comfortable and hygienic in their build for this very purpose. Every mother may, even now, hasten on that time of greater good by recognition of the dignity which baby and his toys confer upon the floor on which he plays. When you show a caller through your garden it does not offend her dignity or yours that she must step with care along the paths which happen to be narrow, and you lead her around the plants that block her way and feel no shame. No more need you when baby's toys are scattered all about. When the guest enters, your air of graceful ease may tell how deep the recognition is that baby is a blessing in the home, as you say,

say, "We all know that where a baby lives the floor belongs to him as much as to any other of the family."

You will say, perhaps, that it is the nursery floor that is his own. Yes, if you choose to have one, and a maid or any person to stay with him there; if not, the blessing is an added one which gives the baby's presence to the family life. Why be ashamed of him before a guest? If you had on your wall a picture of a baby playing with his toys upon the floor by a Millet, and there were no copies of it, your callers would consider it a boon to be allowed to walk over any kind of object, and even over each other, to get a glimpse of it. Is a picture of more value than the life which it portrays?

You sometimes speak self-pityingly of the care of your little family as so absorbing, so full of anxious thought. It is absorbing, yes; but is not that delightful? What could give more beauty to one's life than an absorbing interest in great work? And your work is one of the greatest in the world. In

what

what does value of the life consist? Is it not in feeling, as one wakens in the morning, that something large depends upon one's self, which no one else is set apart to do? And this is care,—the care without anxiety, which every person of character seeks and welcomes. For is it not delightful to know the value that we are to this great world? Think—your portion is one part of the highest work that can be done by woman, and you are solely appointed to perform it! What would you have? a lower service, like that of lecturer or business woman, or the grade of artist who works only with material things to give mankind the beautiful conceptions of her spirit? Would these less noble tasks, moreover, be free from care if you were faithful to them? Not that they are not noble, every one, and good for women who have not the highest, or who have finished motherhood with children. They are all most worthy of a woman's life; but there are ranks in nobleness of work, and you have been allowed the highest. Your

care,

care, if it is in truth a greater than the others, is likewise gladder, more worth while.

But the anxiety in all,—the feeling that if your children come short of what you think they should, or go astray, you are responsible. Ah, stop one moment; here you overstep the limits of your humanhood. God is the keeper of your children's souls, not you. Beyond the limits of your best endeavors you have no further right; and when you take upon yourself anxiety you vitiate all the work it is your part to do. Anxiety itself will ruin your child's life as nothing else can. The atmosphere you make around you is the strongest influence upon him for good or harm that you can bring; stronger than all your teaching; stronger than anything you can do. Mere words and deeds may be forgotten; but your atmosphere permeates the being of your child, just as the air does his body. If it is happy, one in which you meet him in glad companionship and peaceful striving for his highest growth in

in all his God-sent powers, then are you doing everything that a mother can for his welfare. But if you let anxiety come in, it blasts his faculties as truly as does the deadly breath of the sirocco the bodies of men and beasts. The simoon is not poisonous, you remember, except for its great heat and dust. Exactly thus, anxiety is the mother's love intensified to morbid temperature, and mingling with itself, from the fierce dread of what may happen, clouds of fine dust of trivial exactions as precautionary measures which stifle life.

Your weariness, just as you claim yourself, comes largely from this artificial weight, this sense of responsibility not your own. It is unworthy; it stunts your soul's growth and harms your child. You need not for one moment claim for motherhood this burden of anxiety as normal. It is as artificial as all unwholesome cares; they are man-made. God sends us only gladness in every walk of life; the burdens we make largely for ourselves, or else we increase or fail to throw aside those made for us by others.

Therefore

Therefore your real cares are only blessings, for they are your portion of the world's great work, and this it is which gives your life its value. Without them you would be a nonentity, a mere cumberer of the earth. The confusion,—it is but the happy life of childhood, the gladdest of all things. It is not sound alone, like the street noises; it is the pure outpouring of life in living music. It is only harmony, if you will hear it so. It is the fine-toned orchestra accompanying the living drama. The small bickerings, too, of these small folk are nothing serious, if you will meet them rightly; they are your chance for teaching them one of the greatest truths, for they are the beginnings of the struggles which may be not unhappy if you will show the children how to meet them. Almost every struggle of our lives may be transformed into the mere learning how to live, as an apprentice or a student struggles for his education. You may show your children that these same experiences may be met with constant avoidance of the pain, and

so the serious side of life may come to be to them only the painless training of the muscles of their characters.

And the disorder,—there is no such thing within the household of a well-poised mother. It is not order to have everything in a place you have artificially appointed as its own. External order is the fitness of material things for spiritual life. As a large principle to start upon, it does consist in having some place assigned for each article of household use and for the dress of all the members. But it is rank disorder to insist that everything shall always stay in this appointed place; for, many times some temporary resting place for it saves time and thought and higher life. It is a part of growth in every person's character to make the balance true between a real and artificial order; to cast away the kind which hinders, and cherish that which makes for higher living. The leaves upon the ground, the birds upon the window sill, and children's small belongings about the house, at times when

when they are fitting, out of their usual places, are all a part of care-free nature's beauty.

This mode alone of taking those things which have been a trouble would make them blessings, even without considering how much they are modified by your richest gifts of all. Other artists work with dead materials, which give forth no response except what the artist feels replying to him out of the spirit he has himself put into the work. But your artistic materials are living. Every day, and many times a day, the soft arms around you tell you of their love. The sweet tones caress your ear in every "mamma" that strikes upon them. The confidence of these fresh hearts in your superior wisdom,—it is all a stimulus of life on life. And then, your husband,—you have advice from him in your perplexities, comfort in hard places, and personal love and admiration. Your motherhood itself wakens in him the manhood's tenderness. We read in novels of the lover's deep-souled passion; it is as moonshine unto sunshine

compared

compared with the husband's love for the wife when she is to become or has become a mother.

Are all these gifts to be regarded as nothing to a woman, or taken as a matter of course, and not to be cherished and so made a power in your own doing of your part? Do you not know, little woman, wrapped as you are within the warmth which all of husband's care and love can give you, and all that which comes from all your children, protected, sheltered, from the chills that reach those who have no one they may call their own in any special sense,—can you not see that women without marriage never have the strengthening for their weariness that you may have, if you will take it, from these daily gifts of love and trust and appreciation and companionship? Should not these go for something toward counteracting the fatigue, so that at least you should not regard your motherhood as more a weary round than single life?

The Mother-Artist

IX. Limited Means

"Mamma, are we poor?" asked the child, gazing with new-awakened thought upon the modest beauty of the little home

"No, dear," the mother answered, "for we have everything we need"

The Mother-Artist

IX. Limited Means

YOU think that if you had larger means you could do more for your children, and with less weariness to yourself. One of your anxieties for them comes from the inability to get all that you think they need which only money can command. You are right to an extent in your main thought that money is necessary to the best growth, but wrong in your estimate of the amount it takes to gain that end. You must have money to supply them with the material things needful to their highest growth. Materials are the tools with which we work; and other things the same—the finer tools the finer workmanship. Moreover, the tools need ornamentation; for a part of this same

growth

growth is that in knowing the value of the beautiful. Recreations also should have full place, for they give exercise to powers that are idle when one works. The dance, for instance, brings into play some muscles which are not called upon by any kind of toil; and much more, rouses joyous spirits such as work, nor study, nor even mental fun can waken. What pity there is not more dancing,—informal, and in every-day attire, with early hours,—and that it is left so wholly to the children and the young folks! This sombre corner of our world would be a place more inspiring to the highest human life if adults never left off dancing until because they must from weakening of the body, instead of because they have lived for twenty and a few odd years. One's thoughtful adult life needs freshening every little while, as much as that of younger people; and this cannot be gained in fullness except by letting be quiescent, at needed intervals, that portion of the brain which thinks and plans, and giving rein to that other part possible to be exhilarated

hilarated only by joyous movements of the body.

A comfortable amount of money is needed for getting much of the beautiful and the recreative; but you mistake when you suppose that this demands great fortune. The difference in the good things that one can get with a large income more than with moderate means is difference, mostly, in costliness and superabundance. A thing in plain fashion often gives the same return in all that is of value, as the expensive, and oftener than not a healthier one. In a carriage from the stable you have all the comfort, the same scenery, and fun far beyond that Mrs. Lofty can secure within her wealth-bound equipage. Your children have not all attended dancing-school, but those who have, have taught the rest; and the home dancing, with their little mates called in to join, is one of the enjoyments the most highly prized within your children's circle. The teaching of the younger by the elder was the beginning of all those gay times. They have gained, not lost, by your finding it

it extravagant, in your circumstances, to afford the lessons for the little ones. Your furniture is of refined taste, and not too good to use; the family clothing is comely, and not too good to wear; which means that furniture and clothes are suitable for fun and frolic, and can, if injured, be easily replaced without undue strain upon the family purse. What better could a great fortune give you? The stiffnesses and restrictions which large wealth inevitably brings when it is used for things needed in common life which must be "kept nice," and for doing things that society says must be done, hamper the growth of childhood and cramp the life. This cramping, like that of Chinese women's feet, lasts always to the end of earthly days. You have, except in those few years of special struggle in Fred's business, had everything that one could need for free and healthful growing of your children.

But you are right that sufficient means are necessary to the highest life. They are the natural right of every man and woman and child.

child. That the economic system is in such condition as to bring poverty to any willing worker in a world full of resources, where every person's healthful needs demand more labor than he can do himself, consequently where labor is by right abundant, shows that the poverty is clearly the measure of man's ignorance in knowing how to work the system. Poverty is a race crime, and will be seen, repented of, and put away in time. A person may grow spiritually in spite of it, but not because of it, as an abnormal piety has been so fond of preaching. Just as truly also are poverty's accompaniment, enormous fortunes, a hindrance. The possessor of one of these is either burdened by it with unnatural responsibility for using it wisely, or he is enervated or ruined by yielding to its allurments to a merely pleasure-seeking life. You have had neither stunting poverty nor unhealthful wealth, but the normal medium of comfortable circumstances.

And even less easy circumstances than yours have been in general, did not bring

loss.

loss. You have not valued at their highest worth those years when business difficulties of your husband made it best for you to do without a servant. You mourned because you could not "do more" for your children; you could not pay for their tuition in a private school. Why, you were giving them an education in your home such as every good private school now makes an essential of their system,—a training in industrial work; and yours was real, while that of schools is only practice. Your tiny ones were in the kindergarten of real life. You could not have secured for them anything better at a thousand dollars a year. Have you forgotten how skillful they became in many kinds of handiwork? Even little Betty, only two years old, would beg a piece of dough when you were molding biscuit, and seated on the rug, would make one looking much like yours. It was, to be sure, some few shades darker, with a non-practical grayness from her grimy little hands; but that was no hindrance to her learning

the

the art of molding and of molding biscuit; the griminess dropped off in time with other baby things. Fanny, three years older, accomplished some neat sewing in her small way. Do you not see how wasteful was your unhappiness that you could not afford the kindergarten for them? And they learned much besides. You have often spoken of their self-helpfulness in those few years, and their love for helping mamma and saving mamma work. You have seen that those years were fruitful to them in conscious happiness of mutual service. How much of weariness you would have saved yourself if you could have lived in the increasingly stimulating delight, to them and yourself, of knowing that they were gaining rather than losing in all that you imagined you could not afford to give them.

In this life with your children, rich with the deepest growth for your intellect and heart, you have been losing joy and growth as well, because you have been dwelling in the darkness. On that side of life self-pity abides,

and

and you have made of her a boon companion. Sometimes she has told you that you were only a servant and a nursery maid; in your best moods she has convinced you that you were a poor man's wife because you had not millions. In a way, in spite of her mispresentments, you have been brave. You would not pain your husband by laying bare to him the depths of your depression, and you have talked cheerily to your children of the beauty of home-making. But underneath you recognized always your beautiful martyrdom, and cultivated a not small admiration for yourself in bearing it so uncomplainingly. You have succeeded, too, in arousing in your husband and your children this morbid admiration for yourself. Believe me, you are a loser by it, infinitely. A healthy, joyous, care-free spirit would awaken an unspeakably greater depth of the true tenderness than can this burdensome pity they are taught it is their duty to feel for you. Can pity from a sense of duty satisfy your longing for love from them as would spontaneous affection and admiration for your healthy-growing character?

Turn

Turn around and face the light, dear little woman. Remember the fatigue of that fine musician who spends long hours daily at her piano. Her weariness has always in it the air of being worth while. Why should not yours? The mother acts upon fresh, living nature instead of pounding upon ivory keys; for even her material duties have in them, as the real thing worked upon, the growing soul of her God-given child. The music she calls forth is finer than that of the pianist, by just so much as the God-fashioned handiwork is finer than dead metal strings. So your own fatigue may be finer, purer from what drags down and wears out mind and body, than that of any other artist in the world.

The Mother-Artist

X. Gain and More Gain

Why strive so painfully for what you gain of life,
When you may have the whole for the mere asking?

The Mother-Artist

X. Gain and More Gain

YOUR discontent has not been wholly loss. It is less bad than settling down in satisfaction with your own small interests. No person is made to live for self, no family any more than individuals. As long as you were blinded to the larger life you might be leading, it was better to be discontented with the thought of living for the home alone. If you could not see how to make the family life stretch out to touch all the world beyond, then it were better you should strive to bring the world to it, and even grieve because you could not reach more of it to fetch within your home. For thus you have prevented your children's growth into the false notion that, because the

the home is dear, the rest of the world exists for the sole purpose of administering to it, instead of the true order of its becoming a ministering portion to the rest, reciprocally, for service received. Your very longing for a larger life has kept your children warm in social sympathies and interest in all the various interests of the great world, of which they could get some childish comprehension.

Your discontent has rescued you and them from several of the smaller kinds of narrowness. You have been larger than you would have been without it. But there is a still larger life for you and yours than this. We cannot bring the world successfully within our doors; it always is diminished when we try to. We may, though, grow ourselves so large that we can touch the boundaries of the universe. And this is not done, as you have mistakenly supposed, by spending a very large part of one's time outside the home, but by cherishing at all times, whether within or outside of one's own doors, large thoughts and understanding of what life may mean.

mean. You showed this larger thought when you were not content to answer Donald that his father's business was merely the means of money-making for the family. Your instinct, immediately, was to point out his father's life to him as worthy the devotion of a man of dignified and noble character such as you knew Fred to be. And this impulse revealed to you the need of an industrial system worthy, inherently, of all the best in its best men. The largeness of your thought saved you from belittling, in this regard, the family life. It made the family life stretch far away from its own personal limits to become a part of the great world's dignity.

And so with many other things that you have told your children, you have sought out the whole, of which the case in question was a part. Principally, your narrowness has been in one direction,—in looking on your motherhood as, at its best, something of slavery. In this portion of your life you have cramped yourself and all your dear ones within the limits of a self-pitying personality.

sonality. This may have roused in them a love for you, but there can be a healthier love awakened in them, just as warm and true, without the morbidness. It is not your fault wholly that you have made this mistake. You have simply yielded to the spirit of the times, which, while it preaches breadth of life for woman, too often looks pityingly upon the narrowness of what will always be her crowning glory, and may be a more satisfying delight, constantly, than women as a rule have made it. The largeness of the outlook of the modern day has not yet come to its full size, large as it is. It still regards the mother as a slave if she has more than three children at the very most. It has much to say about not having more than one can care for well. This would be good common sense if one point were not almost invariably overlooked, which is the inestimable education that the children give each other, the loss of which no adult can any more compensate them for than they can compensate each other for the loss of father and of mother.

The

The Mother-Artist

The teaching about the larger life of women will never be as large as possible until it shows that the mother is not the slave, but only the hard-working artist. Here you, little mother, have a noble work which you can do. One woman like yourself may help to free numbers of mothers from the slavery of motherhood, and to install them in their rightful places as honored workers in the greatest of the arts. If you see the true nature of your work you can take your stand, and by that alone you will reclaim many of your sisters from their self-imposed slavery. Claim your own position, and nothing more is needed of you to help to raise others now toiling in the dust to their true dignity as artists of the world.

The Mother-Artist

XI. A Protest and the Answer

The angel still, within your child, pleads for companionship;
For that angelic comrade and yourself
May master deadening wants, and fashion from your cares
Rare forms of living beauty

The Mother-Artist

XI. A Protest and the Answer

THE MOTHER SPEAKS

I HAVE listened amazed to all this that you have been saying. I never have been such a wonderful mother as you represent me. The experiences which you have recalled are most true, to be sure, but they were mere incidents, not anything more than that. I have always tried to be faithful, and bring up my children as well as I knew how to do. And they *are* good children; you have made no mistake about that. But I seem to have had very little to do with their being so. I know that the love they have brought and have wakened in me has been very beautiful. I know, as you say, that all my intellect has been demanded and strengthened in meeting their questions. But oh! how far short I have

have fallen of what I have wanted to do for them! I never had time to give them really the instruction I longed to give them. No doubt I have grown in trying to guide them in growing; but I could have grown so much more if I could have had the time needed to train them more carefully. I see, too, what you say of the babies as being my teachers. I have said something like this to Fred very often; but the form which it took in my mind was that in trying to teach them I learned for myself. This is true, but as you say, the greatest gain to me was from the lighting up of my thoughts by their innocence, which showed me either the great or the little worth of them.

No doubt what you say of disorder and care and small income may be so. But, especially regarding the income, a mother must want to provide for her children as others do. No mother is willing to have other women surpass her in what she can give to her children of comfort and pleasure and learning of all kinds. And I will confess

even

even more—the style of one's living does seem of some moment when the welfare of children depends on it. Any mother desires that her own shall have their surroundings as good as their playmates can have. This is no more than human, and if it is wrong I can't help it. We all of us turn out the devil, I think, from our motives and acts when we find he is in them; but a little of the world and the flesh we must have as long as we live in the body. We must care that our children shall be dressed becomingly, and that they shall have some of the luxuries, and that they shall be kept in freedom from arduous drudgery.

You say I have pitied myself; yes, I have, I acknowledge. I have thought it was hard that I could not have time for self-culture, which would benefit not only myself but the children. All this education which you say I have given them has been incidental and scrappy. I never have seemed to be doing for them what was of very much value. I have tried to teach them good principles,

and

and to answer their questions with real information, and show them the genuine philosophy of life as far as I knew it, and to impress upon them if I could that true philosophy is also religion; but I had not the time to make this the real life I was leading, as you have implied that I did. My real life has been in the caring, first of all, for their bodies. And oh! how it tired me, especially with the boys, when such care was all new! It was not so hard with the others, though always it took every power that I had, both physical and mental. I used to feel sometimes that I could not bear the fatigue any longer. I even have wished I could lie down and die rather than go on with it. But in some way I always got through it; and I cannot in honesty say that my health on the whole has been worse for it. At present I could not make plea as an invalid, for there are not many women as well as I am.

But in all of the way there has been more of care for the bodies than even for the souls

of

of the children. How could I help it? The endless number of shoes and stockings to be bought and kept whole, the under and outer wear for them all, the constant renewing demanded by their constant growing, and all to be done in the most economical fashion —how can even the growth of their souls be more than secondary, when all these *must* be attended to before anything else? And constantly accidents to some of the clothing, the tearing and spoiling in one way or another, keep the wardrobes in endless unfinish. The mere daily task of getting them off to school in the morning is not a small thing. And this is not always a purely mechanical process, consisting of finding stray caps, gloves and books, and other of their special possessions, and seeing them fitted to the heads and the hands they belong to; if this were all, it might not be so fatiguing to body and spirit. But though my children, as you have said, are good children, and my husband as noble a man as is living—God bless him—still no one of them yet is an angel, and no more am I;

I; and when on some morning especially crowded, Donald's stubbornness, Tom's fiery temper, Fanny's vixenish love of teasing her brothers, little Betty's imperiousness, and baby's three-year-old babyishness all turn on each other and form themselves into a whirlwind, and Fred stalks around the house like some baffled giant (his stalkings would not be quite so disturbing if he was not so big), *wishing* Mary *would* let his desk alone when she is cleaning his study, and my own not large patience gives way in the general hubbub,—why the family atmosphere loses the serenity you have implied that it had, as of heaven, and seems to my senses more like some other place considerably different.

Then when they are gone the baby must be sent out for her airing, and when she comes in there is more or less care of her constantly. Then the forenoon is gone, and the children come home from their schools, hungry, and perhaps ragged and dirty; and the afternoon is spent in mending of mittens, or coat, or torn frock; or at the dentist's or

dancing-school.

dancing-school. Without any warning, too, come the sicknesses, little and big, the unrestful nights and tired-out days with whooping-cough, chicken-pox, and the measles. How can it be thought that a mother is doing the work for her children which you have ideally pictured, when really her life is one long course in not much more than physical duties?

But if I could have got through even with these with a constant sense of love to my children, I should not appear to myself the failure I am. Instead I have oftentimes felt so overburdened, so crowded and pressed and bewildered, that my heart seemed to turn to stone toward them and my husband. God forgive me! I have felt at such moments as if I never had loved them, nor ever should love them; all I longed for was just to get off by myself in some corner and rest. You did not know that I had been wicked like this, or you would never have said all the flattering things that you have of me. In spite of it all, my husband and children do

love

love me devotedly; but that is because they are themselves so loving and kind, and do not know me as I really am.

But you see that what you have told of me is wholly ideal. It does not describe a mother like me. A woman might have such a life who had always been rich and had brought up her children without any struggle, but not one with a moderate income like ours.

THE ANSWER

My picture is of one side of your life, and yours is of the other. Mine is as true as yours; you have acknowledged it. Your error is in this—you look upon the hard, external part as the important, and think of the real things as incidental. Reverse the two, and you will understand the true delight of the hard-working artist.

You cannot, do you say? If you should try it, month by month, and year by year, success would come to you in time,
Because :—

Your dark and desperate feelings are not those of motherhood alone. Every soul

that

that grows to anything more than the mere external man or woman experiences the same. Your husband, when the stress of business strains his every nerve, and failure seems to stare him in the face, has just such cold and loveless feelings as yourself. There is no man whose character is growing but has encountered some form of these desperate states, even to a degree which seems to him at times completely hopeless in its enormity. All women struggle with the same kind of unhappiness, the rich and poor, the married and the single. The wealthy mother is often brought into the torture of despair when she first realizes the snares with which her wealth surrounds her children; the rich woman, unmarried, is desperate because her life is proving nothing but a failure, when she discovers that with money and abundant leisure she can make no visible impression on the evils of the world, which bring its untold horrors of the present, and threaten to destroy its future welfare. The wage-earner, single, when these states are upon her, feels herself

herself a drudge and nothing more, for her whole lifetime; and one cause of these dark moods in single women and childless wives is, whether they know of it or not, that most of them are hungry for the love of little ones they never will be blessed with as their own—for the giving forth their mothering service, which belongs by natural right to every woman to do. Your especial trials are from the abundance of your blessings; those of the childless, from the deprivation of them. Which is the most easily curable, think you?

And because:—

The whirlwinds you describe, if wisely thought about, are not the injury that they seem to be. They furnish you examples of the evil that might be if all of you indulged in freedom in such tempers. They are the means by which the children may know something of the evils which make havoc with the world. Some knowledge of these evils is most necessary to every person, for without knowing of their nature

one

one could never work to do his part in overcoming them in the communal life. Neither are your states of coldness harmful to your children, as you suppose. They come either from your physical fatigue or are, as has just been said, the effect of spiritual struggles into higher life. Such strivings are the means of final good to all; the temporary darkness and despair are only shadows, and make no real impression on your loved ones.

And because:—

Your longing for the time to give them more instruction, and for your own better growing, is an error. You are mistaken as to the nature of human growing when you think this. No growth can be so healthy for one's self, and so large, as that gained by the skillful hands when guided by the skillful brain; and this your work has been. And for the verbal teaching of your children which I have shown you that you did, and you have said my words are true, no basis could be so solid and so sure as this same

busy

busy life you have been leading. Resting on that, your words all have a meaning which words without deeds never can express. What you call "scrappiness" is something the very opposite of what that word implies. It is the leading of your children's minds by God himself, which impels them to ask about one thing at one moment and another at the next. God has not bound life into volumes of history, science, and religion. He makes the mind open and ready for all learning, and your children's questions are from the exercise of their God-fashioned souls. The schools have had too much of the man-made "system of instruction." God save the homes from it!

Live in the real things as your real life, and in your thoughts and feelings make the buying of the shoes, however much there is, the incidental. If you feel sure that this cannot be done, prove by the trying, faithfully and long, whether or not this is only a visionary dream.

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